

# **Child/Youth Protection Policy Statement for Milford United Methodist Church *Adopted by Church Council July 7, 2004***

## **Treatment of Children/Youth:**

- All children/youth must be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Never use, or threaten to use, physical contact or verbal interaction with a child/youth that can be threatening, punishing (rough handling), demeaning, suggestive, abusive or sexual in manner. Physical contact to restrain a child/youth from hurting him/her self or others must be used in the least restrictive way possible.

## **Supervision of Children/Youth:**

- All interior windows must remain uncovered so that children/youth are able to be seen at all times from public places (i.e. hallways).
- Children/youth should not be allowed to leave the classroom/activity area during class/activity time without age-appropriate guidance.
- An adult leader must be with children/youth at all times. To avoid the isolation of children/youth with adults, at least two adults must be present in a room whenever children/youth are present or the door must have an unobstructed window or the door must be left open. When children's/youth's workers are transporting children/youth to and/or from church activities, a situation where there is only one child/youth and one unrelated adult alone in an automobile should be avoided.
- Do not send two children/youth off for behavior problems or to work privately. Do not allow an older child/youth to take a younger child/youth off for private time.

## **Off-Premises Activities:**

- All activities off premises must have a minimum of two adults. One male and one female are required if it is a coed group and overnight in duration.
- Written permission slips must be obtained from parents or guardians before any off premise trips are taken or before any child/youth is transported to and from events. In emergency situations, best judgment is allowed.
- All private meetings (on or off premises) between adult worker and child/youth must be approved by parents/guardians and a church leader before the meeting.
- Only adults with a valid driver's license and a safe driving record will do any transporting of children/youth. Drivers will obey all traffic laws while transporting children/youth. Drivers will be asked to affirm that they have a current and valid driver's license and that their vehicle is appropriately registered, insured and inspected. All children/youth must use appropriate safety restraints.

**Other:**

¶1 An annual training workshop for all Sunday School and youth workers should be established. Support, guidance and instruction should be available to help them with their work within the church. This Child/Youth Protection Policy Statement will be shared with all workers each year. This policy will be reviewed periodically for necessary changes.

¶2 Children/youth workers must have been members for at least six months or have been in regular attendance for at least one year to be considered for working with children/youth. All who work with children/youth, both paid and volunteer, will complete an application form, which will ask about previous experience in children/youth work and for references. These references and other background material will be checked. Persons who have been working with children/youth for at least one year during the preceding five years at the time of the inception of the policy will be allowed to continue in their positions while their references checks are completed. Interviews will be conducted. All applications and reference contact forms will be confidential and restricted to legitimate use.

¶3 In the event of an allegation, the pastor is the only person to talk to the media. If the pastor is not available then the lay leader will be designated the spokesperson for the church. If the accusation is against the pastor, the District Superintendent would be the spokesperson. If the lay leader is involved and the pastor is unavailable, the chair of the Church Council would be the spokesperson.

¶4 A reporting procedure for all alleged incidents of abuse will be established.

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR ABOVE PARAGRAPHS #1,2,3**

1a. At the first Christian Education meeting of each program year, the Christian Education Team Leader or pastor will review the Child/Youth Protection Policy with all department workers to ensure their awareness and understanding of the policy.

1b. As the policy is implemented and experienced, the Christian Education Team may elect to review the content of the policy as they deem necessary, and submit revisions to the Church Council for approval.

2a. Beginning with the Summer of 2004 and thereafter, application forms will be distributed by the Christian Education Team to all active Child/Youth workers for completion and immediate return.

2b. The pastor will conduct prescribed interviews with Christian Education workers and volunteers during the late Summer and early Fall.

3a. In the event of an allegation, follow the procedure outlined in the policy (second page third paragraph of the policy sub-headed "Other").

3b. Allegations of sexual harassment automatically call into action the "Policy of Milford UMC Dealing with Sexual Harassment".

**REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR ABOVE PARAGRAPH #4**

In the event that any child or youth is subject to abuse, they may make complaint to any Christian Education worker, the Christian Education Team Leader or Pastor who will begin immediate investigation. The Christian Education Team Leader or pastor may invite those others s/he deems necessary for the purpose of conducting a thorough investigation. Those assisting in the investigation will be instructed in the tenets of confidentiality.

In the event that the charges are substantiated, the Christian Education worker will be removed from their position and referred to the pastor.

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